

CLAIMS

1. A system for transmitting information in a broadcast distribution system that is targeted to a system user comprising:

5 a) a network headend for transmitting at least one information stream to a plurality of users, said information stream being comprised of a plurality of information selections and a plurality of corresponding codes, each said code identifying a characteristic of a corresponding one of said selections that is employed to identify a system user to whom either said selection should be transmitted, or additional information should be transmitted;

10 b) a distribution network for transmitting said information stream with said codes;

15 c) a plurality of terminal devices interfaced to said distribution network for receiving said information stream, each said terminal device including a terminal processor and a user demographic database that contains demographic information about a corresponding user of said terminal device, said terminal processor being programmed to compare each code for each selection in said information stream with said demographic information in said database, and determine there from whether said user is designated to receive said selection or additional information.

20 2. The system of claim 1, wherein said headend further includes an encoder for generating said codes, and inserting said codes into said information stream, one each before a corresponding one of said selections.

25 3. The system of claim 1, wherein said information stream is a video information stream, said broadcast distribution system is a cable television distribution system, and said terminal devices are each a set top converter box.

30 4. The system of claim 3, wherein said information selections include advertisements.

35 5. The system of claim 1, wherein said terminal processor is further programmed to provide a prompt to a corresponding user if said processor determines that said user is

designated to receive said additional information.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein said headend further includes a database containing said additional information that is to be made available to selected system users,
5 based on the demographic information in the user demographic database.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein said headend includes a multiplexer for simultaneously transmitting a plurality of said information streams on a plurality of corresponding downstream channels that are interfaced between said distribution network
10 and said terminal devices, each said information stream including information selections that are targeted to different user demographics, and said terminal processor in each said terminal is programmed to determine a selected one of said downstream channels on which a selected information selection targeted to a user of said terminal device is to be received, and access said selected information selection.

15 8. The system of claim 7, wherein said terminal device further includes a tuner for selecting a one of said downstream channels to receive, and said terminal processor is further programmed to instruct said tuner to tune to said selected one of said downstream channels to receive said selected information selection.

20 9. The system of claim 8, wherein said terminal processor is further programmed to instruct said tuner to tune back to a previously selected channel after a designated one of said selections has been received.

25 10. The system of claim 7, wherein said information streams include at least one group of information selections, each selection of which is simultaneously transmitted with the other selections in said group, and is targeted to users having different demographics than those of users to which the other selections in said group are targeted.

30 11. The system of claim 10, wherein said headend further includes an insertion module for inserting said groups of information selections into said information streams.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein each information selection in said groups comprises an advertisement.

5 13. The system of claim 11, wherein each information selection is transmitted in a different PID of a common digital channel.

14. A method for transmitting information in a broadcast distribution system that is targeted to a system user comprising:

10 a) providing at least one information stream in a network headend, said information stream being comprised of a plurality of information selections and a plurality of corresponding codes, each said code identifying a characteristic of a corresponding one of said selections that is employed to identify a system user to whom either said selection should be transmitted, or additional information should be transmitted;

15 b) transmitting said at least one information stream to a plurality of terminal devices, each said terminal device including a terminal processor and a user demographic database that contains demographic information about a corresponding user of said terminal device; and

20 c) employing said terminal processor to compare each code for each selection in said information stream with said demographic information in said database, and determine there from whether said user is designated to receive said selection or additional information.

25 15. The method of claim 14, wherein said codes are inserted in said at least one information stream by an encoder in said headend. The step of providing at least one information stream further comprises obtaining a first information stream and encoding said first information stream with said codes to form said at least one information stream generating said codes, and inserting said codes into said information stream, one each before a corresponding one of said selections.

30

16. The method of claim 14, wherein said information stream is a video

information stream, said broadcast distribution system is a cable television distribution system, and said terminal devices are each a set top converter box.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said information selections include
5 advertisements.

18. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of providing a prompt to a corresponding user if said terminal processor determines that said user is designated to receive said additional information.

10

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of transmitting said additional information from a database in said headend.

15
20

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of transmitting further comprises:
1) multiplexing a plurality of said information streams and simultaneously transmitting said plurality of information streams, each said information stream including information selections that are targeted to different user demographics;
2) determining with said terminal processor a selected one of said information selections that is targeted to a user of said terminal device; and
3) accessing said selected one of said information selections from said information stream.

25
21. The method of claim 20, wherein said terminal device further includes a tuner for selecting a one of said downstream channels to receive, and said step of accessing further comprises instructing said tuner with said terminal processor to tune to said selected one of said downstream channels to receive said selected information selection.

30
22. The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of instructing said tuner with said terminal processor to tune back to a previously selected channel after a designated one of said selections has been received.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein said information streams include at least one group of information selections, each selection of which is simultaneously transmitted with the other selections in said group, and is targeted to users having different demographics than those of users to which the other selections in said group are targeted.

5

24. The method of claim 20, wherein each information selection in said group is transmitted in a different PID of a common digital channel.

10

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128
129
130
131
132
133
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150
151
152
153
154
155
156
157
158
159
160
161
162
163
164
165
166
167
168
169
170
171
172
173
174
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247
248
249
250
251
252
253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264
265
266
267
268
269
270
271
272
273
274
275
276
277
278
279
280
281
282
283
284
285
286
287
288
289
290
291
292
293
294
295
296
297
298
299
300
301
302
303
304
305
306
307
308
309
310
311
312
313
314
315
316
317
318
319
320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
3310
3311
3312
3313
3314
3315
3316
3317
3318
3319
33100
33101
33102
33103
33104
33105
33106
33107
33108
33109
33110
33111
33112
33113
33114
33115
33116
33117
33118
33119
331100
331101
331102
331103
331104
331105
331106
331107
331108
331109
331110
331111
331112
331113
331114
331115
331116
331117
331118
331119
3311100
3311101
3311102
3311103
3311104
3311105
3311106
3311107
3311108
3311109
3311110
3311111
3311112
3311113
3311114
3311115
3311116
3311117
3311118
3311119
33111100
33111101
33111102
33111103
33111104
33111105
33111106
33111107
33111108
33111109
33111110
33111111
33111112
33111113
33111114
33111115
33111116
33111117
33111118
33111119
331111100
331111101
331111102
331111103
331111104
331111105
331111106
331111107
331111108
331111109
331111110
331111111
331111112
331111113
331111114
331111115
331111116
331111117
331111118
331111119
3311111100
3311111101
3311111102
3311111103
3311111104
3311111105
3311111106
3311111107
3311111108
3311111109
3311111110
3311111111
3311111112
3311111113
3311111114
3311111115
3311111116
3311111117
3311111118
3311111119
33111111100
33111111101
33111111102
33111111103
33111111104
33111111105
33111111106
33111111107
33111111108
33111111109
33111111110
33111111111
33111111112
33111111113
33111111114
33111111115
33111111116
33111111117
33111111118
33111111119
331111111100
331111111101
331111111102
331111111103
331111111104
331111111105
331111111106
331111111107
331111111108
331111111109
331111111110
331111111111
331111111112
331111111113
331111111114
331111111115
331111111116
331111111117
331111111118
331111111119
3311111111100
3311111111101
3311111111102
3311111111103
3311111111104
3311111111105
3311111111106
3311111111107
3311111111108
3311111111109
3311111111110
3311111111111
3311111111112
3311111111113
3311111111114
3311111111115
3311111111116
3311111111117
3311111111118
3311111111119
33111111111100
33111111111101
33111111111102
33111111111103
33111111111104
33111111111105
33111111111106
33111111111107
33111111111108
33111111111109
33111111111110
33111111111111
33111111111112
33111111111113
33111111111114
33111111111115
33111111111116
33111111111117
33111111111118
33111111111119
331111111111100
331111111111101
331111111111102
331111111111103
331111111111104
331111111111105
331111111111106
331111111111107
331111111111108
331111111111109
331111111111110
331111111111111
331111111111112
331111111111113
331111111111114
331111111111115
331111111111116
331111111111117
331111111111118
331111111111119
3311111111111100
3311111111111101
3311111111111102
3311111111111103
3311111111111104
3311111111111105
3311111111111106
3311111111111107
3311111111111108
3311111111111109
3311111111111110
3311111111111111
3311111111111112
3311111111111113
3311111111111114
3311111111111115
3311111111111116
3311111111111117
3311111111111118
3311111111111119
33111111111111100
33111111111111101
33111111111111102
33111111111111103
33111111111111104
33111111111111105
33111111111111106
33111111111111107
33111111111111108
33111111111111109
33111111111111110
33111111111111111
33111111111111112
33111111111111113
33111111111111114
33111111111111115
33111111111111116
33111111111111117
33111111111111118
33111111111111119
331111111111111100
331111111111111101
331111111111111102
331111111111111103
331111111111111104
331111111111111105
331111111111111106
331111111111111107
331111111111111108
331111111111111109
331111111111111110
331111111111111111
331111111111111112
331111111111111113
331111111111111114
331111111111111115
331111111111111116
331111111111111117
331111111111111118
331111111111111119
3311111111111111100
3311111111111111101
3311111111111111102
3311111111111111103
3311111111111111104
3311111111111111105
3311111111111111106
3311111111111111107
3311111111111111108
3311111111111111109
3311111111111111110
3311111111111111111
3311111111111111112
3311111111111111113
3311111111111111114
3311111111111111115
3311111111111111116
3311111111111111117
3311111111111111118
3311111111111111119
33111111111111111100
33111111111111111101
33111111111111111102
33111111111111111103
33111111111111111104
33111111111111111105
33111111111111111106
33111111111111111107
33111111111111111108
33111111111111111109
33111111111111111110
33111111111111111111
33111111111111111112
33111111111111111113
33111111111111111114
33111111111111111115
33111111111111111116
33111111111111111117
33111111111111111118
33111111111111111119
331111111111111111100
331111111111111111101
331111111111111111102
331111111111111111103
331111111111111111104
331111111111111111105
331111111111111111106
331111111111111111107
331111111111111111108
331111111111111111109
331111111111111111110
331111111111111111111
331111111111111111112
331111111111111111113
331111111111111111114
331111111111111111115
331111111111111111116
331111111111111111117
331111111111111111118
331111111111111111119
3311111111111111111100
3311111111111111111101
3311111111111111111102
3311111111111111111103
3311111111111111111104
3311111111111111111105
3311111111111111111106
3311111111111111111107
3311111111111111111108
3311111111111111111109
3311111111111111111110
3311111111111111111111
3311111111111111111112
3311111111111111111113
3311111111111111111114
3311111111111111111115
3311111111111111111116
3311111111111111111117
3311111111111111111118
3311111111111111111119
33111111111111111111100
33111111111111111111101
33111111111111111111102
33111111111111111111103
33111111111111111111104
33111111111111111111105
33111111111111111111106
33111111111111111111107
33111111111111111111108
33111111111111111111109
33111111111111111111110
33111111111111111111111
33111111111111111111112
33111111111111111111113
33111111111111111111114
33111111111111111111115
33111111111111111111116
33111111111111111111117
33111111111111111111118
33111111111111111111119
331111111111111111111100
331111111111111111111101
331111111111111111111102
331111111111111111111103
331111111111111111111104
331111111111111111111105
331111111111111111111106
331111111111111111111107
331111111111111111111108
331111111111111111111109
331111111111111111111110
331111111111111111111111
331111111111111111111112
331111111111111111111113
331111111111111111111114
331111111111111111111115
331111111111111111111116
331111111111111111111117
331111111111111111111118
331111111111111111111119
3311111111111111111111100
3311111111111111111111101
3311111111111111111111102
3311111111111111111111103
3311111111111111111111104
3311111111111111111111105
3311111111111111111111106
3311111111111111111111107
3311111111111111111111108
3311111111111111111111109
3311111111111111111111110
3311111111111111111111111
3311111111111111111111112
3311111111111111111111113
3311111111111111111111114
3311111111111111111111115
3311111111111111111111116
3311111111111111111111117
3311111111111111111111118
3311111111111111111111119
33111111111111111111111100
33111111111111111111111101
33111111111111111111111102
33111111111111111111111103
33111111111111111111111104
33111111111111111111111105
33111111111111111111111106
33111111111111111111111107
33111111111111111111111108
33111111111111111111111109
33111111111111111111111110
33111111111111111111111111
33111111111111111111111112
33111111111111111111111113
33111111111111111111111114
33111111111111111111111115
33111111111111111111111116
33111111111111111111111117
33111111111111111111111118
33111111111111111111111119
331111111111111111111111100
331111111111111111111111101
331111111111111111111111102
331111111111111111111111103
331111111111111111111111104
331111111111111111111111105
331111111111111111111111106
331111111111111111111111107
331111111111111111111111108
331111111111111111111111109
331111111111111111111111110
331111111111111111111111111
331111111111111111111111112
331111111111111111111111113
331111111111111111111111114
331111111111111111111111115
331111111111111111111111116
331111111111111111111111117
331111111111111111111111118
331111111111111111111111119
3311111111111111111111111100
3311111111111111111111111101
3311111111111111111111111102
3311111111111111111111111103
3311111111111111111111111104
3311111111111111111111111105
3311111111111111111111111106
3311111111111111111111111107
3311111111111111111111111108
3311111111111111111111111109
3311111111111111111111111110
3311111111111111111111111111
3311111111111111111111111112
3311111111111111111111111113
3311111111111111111111111114
3311111111111111111111111115
3311111111111111111111111116
3311111111111111111111111117
3311111111111111111111111118
3311111111111111111111111119
33111111111111111111111111100
33111111111111111111111111101
33111111111111111111111111102
33111111111111111111111111103
33111111111111111111111111104
33111111111111111111111111105
33111111111111111111111111106
33111111111111111111111111107
33111111111111111111111111108
33111111111111111111111111109
33111111111111111111111111110
33111111111111111111111111111
33111111111111111111111111112
33111111111111111111111111113
33111111111111111111111111114
33111111111111111111111111115
33111111111111111111111111116
33111111111111111111111111117
33111111111111111111111111118
33111111111111111111111111119
331111111111111111111111111100